

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

Quarterly

News-Letter

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A FLYER IN JOURNALISM

"I have observed that a Reader seldom peruses a Book with Pleasure 'till he knows whether the Writer of it be a black or fair Man, of a mild or cholerick Disposition, Married or a Batchelor, with other Particulars of a like nature, that conduce very much to the right Understanding of an Author."

THESE EMINENTLY sensible words stand at the top of page one, column one, of the first issue of a newly-launched newspaper. Now, journalism has always been a notoriously speculative enterprise and this particular venture proved no exception to the rule. In all, something less than six hundred and fifty numbers were published, and at no time during its short life

did it exhibit any of the signs (increased number of pages, better paper, crowded advertising columns) by which the rise of journalistic prosperity can be traced. It began as a modest sheet, with text limited to four columns of type (two on each side of a single leaf that was hardly larger than a sheet of foolscap) and it was in exactly the same form when it ended less than two years later.

Although the little paper failed to enrich its two proprietors, posterity is agreed that it did much to enrich English literature. For this short-lived periodical was the famous *Spectator*; its owners were Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, and its influence on the manners, thought and literary tastes of England during the closing years of Queen Anne's reign was both profound and lasting. The *Spectator* is credited with having given the first great impetus to the popularity of periodical literature in England. Because it was the first to trace the history of certain imaginary characters through successive issues, it hastened the beginning of the English novel and influenced its form. In Sir Roger de Coverley it created one of the notable fictional characters of English literature, and it was in its columns that Addison brought a new literary form, the brief, topical essay, to a degree of perfection rarely equalled and never surpassed.

The *Spectator* began publication "at the Dolphin in Little Britain, London," on March 1, 1711. It continued until December 6, 1712. At the height of its popularity its daily circulation was probably less than four thousand copies. Of these the vast majority promptly disappeared, for they were passed about the London coffee houses and literally "read to pieces."

In consequence, copies of the paper are highly prized today, both for their rarity and for their literary importance.

In view of all this, the Club is happy to announce that it has acquired a run of some four hundred copies of this famous paper (all in a remarkably fine state of preservation), and that its next publication is to be an extended paper on the *Spectator*, its history, influence and contributors, by the celebrated English essayist, Eric Partridge. *An original issue of the Spectator will be bound in each copy.* All the details have not yet been completed but this much may be announced: the book will be designed and printed by The Grabhorn Press, the edition will probably be four hundred copies, the publication date will be about June 1, and the price not more than \$6.00.

An announcement of this truly outstanding publication will reach members in due course. Meantime, advance orders are welcome. They will be entered strictly in the order received.

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#### NEW ADDRESS

ON OR about March 15 the Club will move its office from 110 Sutter Street, where it has been since 1921, to more modern and convenient quarters in the Russ Building, around the corner on Montgomery Street. The new office is now being fitted up. On its completion it will provide an adequate, though not elaborate, setting for the Club's activities. There will be a separate storage and mailing room—which has long been needed—as well as proper facilities for the display of Club publications and for the efficient transaction of

Club business. Members are invited to inspect the new quarters.

It is interesting to recall that during the eighteen years it has been at the old location, the Club has made a substantial growth. Since 1921 membership has increased three-fold. From the Sutter Street address some two scores of publications were issued; there lectures and exhibitions were planned and, more recently, a variety of new activities were originated and maintained. May the Club's history in the new quarters be as varied and interesting!



## BOOK EXHIBITS ON TREASURE ISLAND

by CARROLL D. HALL

*Editor's Note: Bibliophiles who plan to visit the Golden Gate International Exposition, which opened February 18, will be interested to learn that among the multitude of exhibits they will find a number of collections of books well worthy of their attention. Mr. Hall's necessarily brief article lists the more important of these collections and tells something of the scope and purposes of each.*

SEVERAL IMPORTANT exhibitions of particular interest to lovers of books and fine printing are being shown at the Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island. Although one trembles at the prospect of a bookless world (what with television, talking robots and other push-button marvels displayed elsewhere), there is comfort in the reflection that type, paper and printer's ink form the Big Three of civilization. It is a trio not likely to be supplanted for some time.

Stressing the part played by the printed word in the cultural and material development of California from

the early days to the present, a comprehensive exhibit has been assembled in the Hall of Printing, California State Building. In this attractive setting, overlooking the Lakes of the Nations, are to be found rare examples of Spanish and Mexican imprints, specimens of typography prior to and after the American occupation, printing from the time of statehood in 1850 to the turn of the century, and products of the modern fine presses. Here the observer will note the technical advances in printing from the time of Don Agustin V. Zamorano, the Mexican army officer stationed at Monterey, who imported the first printing press to be set up west of the Rocky Mountains, in 1834. The state's first newspaper, the *Californian*, established in Monterey in August 1846, is shown, as is also the *California Star*, San Francisco's first, which was founded in January 1847. Pioneer printing from every county in the state has been sought. Newspapers, broadsides, pamphlets and books are included in this visualization of the typographical side of California's romantic history.

For the modern examples, each of the state's better known printers of fine books—some twelve or fourteen—has selected items which he considers representative of his best work, and these make an imposing display with great credit to Western craftsmen and their patrons.

One of the most handsome buildings on the island is Pacific House, and its most worthy attraction, from the bookman's standpoint, is a book fair, a display of several thousand volumes dealing with people and lands of the Pacific. Books help overcome distances, states a poster in Pacific House. "They reflect conditions of life in strange lands, explain unfamiliar customs and

ideas, and substitute for prejudice some understanding of the causes that have shaped the fortunes and the character of one people different from those of another."

Most of the leading American and English publishers sent books from their active lists for this exhibit, which was organized by Bruno Lasker, educational director of the American Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations, and Philip Newell Youtz, director of Pacific House.

"Our main effort," says Mr. Lasker, "is to demonstrate to people that books offer a different and more lasting satisfaction than any other way of getting information."

In addition, Pacific House has arranged a series of informal talks by distinguished authors and bookmen. These are free to the public, and are held on Friday evenings at 8:30 in the conference room. First to be heard were Phyllis Bentley, Charles Caldwell Dobie, and Dane and Mary Roberts Coolidge. Others scheduled are: March 17—Sidney B. Mitchell. "A California Gardener's Debt to the Pacific." March 24—Victor Wolfgang von Hagen. "Galapagos . . . One Hundred Years after Darwin." March 31—Quail Hawkins. "Children's Books on China and Japan." April 7—Mrs. Fremont Older. "Some Spanish Women in California's Past." April 14—Gertrude Atherton. "Strange Worlds . . . Bound and Unbound."

Special displays are also planned. The current display is of old books and maps dealing with Pacific exploration, loaned by the Bancroft Library of the University of California.

In the Temple of Religion, a fine collection of old and historic Bibles has been arranged by John Howell. There are, for example:

An original leaf from the Gutenberg Bible, Mainz, 1450-1455. Original leaves from St. John the Baptist, printed by Wynken de Worde, Caxton's foreman, Westminster (1498). Thomas Carlyle's copy of the King James Bible, with his signature and reference notes. King James Bible, Cambridge, 1661, from the library of Samuel Johnson. The first Bible printed in New York, 1792. George Washington headed the list of subscribers. King James Bible which belonged to Thomas Heyward, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. With family record, 1773-1774, including three of the rare signatures of this signer. A leaf from the Eliot Indian Bible, the first Bible printed in America.

The fine bookbinding exhibition is housed in the Palace of Fine and Decorative Arts. Case after case is filled with richly tooled examples of the bookbinder's art at its best in the modern manner. Many were lent by Morgan A. Gunst of San Francisco, who assembled the display. Of the foreign bindings, those from France, Norway, England, and Canada, predominate, but there are interesting loans from Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Hungary, Finland, Poland and Switzerland. From the United States, some twenty-five leading contemporary binders are represented.

Local binders whose work is shown include Belle McMurtry Young, Mrs. John I. Walter, Ernestine E. Moller, Mrs. A. B. C. Dohrmann, Mrs. Douglas Watson, Octavia Holden, and Herbert and Peter Fahey.

Other special exhibits are:

Bindings by T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, because of his inspiration and influence on English contemporary fine bookbinding. Bindings by Marius-Michel, known as

the grandfather of modern French bookbinding. Bindings by Pierre Legrain, called the father of modern French bookbinding. Bindings by some of the advanced pupils of Ecole Estienne for the Paris Exposition of 1937. Hand-blocked silk end papers by Anita Conti. Examples of fine modern illustrations, assembled by Miss Jane Neylan.

There is also an atelier demonstrating the art of bookbinding and showing the tools and materials used in the various processes of binding. Peter Fahey is in charge of the demonstration.

Adjoining the fine bindings is a display of the current Fifty Books of the Year, arranged for the American Institute of Graphic Arts by Jane Grabhorn. These books, chosen from the national output for utility and typographical excellence, include volumes from the Grabhorn Press, San Francisco, University of California Press, Berkeley, Gillick Press, Berkeley, and the Plantin Press, Los Angeles.

In the French Pavilion are shown some two-score rare French volumes in historical bindings. These were sent to Treasure Island by the Bibliotheque Nationale.

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SIX CALIFORNIA TALES

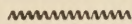
IN 1937 the Club published, as the fourth of its annual keepsakes, a group of six short stories by present-day writers. The series, Contemporary California Short Stories, proved popular. Requests for copies of certain of the stories—complete sets are no longer available—still frequently reach the Club.

Because this series of two years ago was well received, the Club decided to follow a somewhat similar

plan during the current year. The 1939 series will resemble Contemporary California Short Stories in that it will consist of six stories by California writers of distinction, and each story will be designed and printed by a different California press. The difference is that while the stories of the earlier series were by contemporary writers, those of the 1939 group will be by California authors of an earlier day. The title is Six California Tales.

Part One of the series, distributed some days ago, was "The Gentleman in the Barrel," one of Chester Bailey Fernald's delightful but now little-known tales of San Francisco's Chinatown. The pamphlet was designed and printed in appropriate spirit by Wilder and Ellen Bentley at their Archetype Press, Berkeley. Part Two, to be ready in April, will be "The Case of Summerfield," by W. H. Rhodes, the story of a remarkable scientific discovery, so convincingly told that on its first publication in San Francisco in the early '70s many believed it to be true. The titles and authors of the remaining four stories will be announced as arrangements are completed.

Slipcases for Six California Tales, uniform with those for the earlier series, are now being made; they will be supplied at cost to members. Prices: for all-cloth covering, \$2.00; for cloth with morocco back, \$3.00.



BOOK SALE

IN RECENT years the great majority of Club publications have been fully subscribed by the members within a few weeks, or at most a few months, after publication. This was not always the case. Prior to

1930 the number of orders for a new publication often fell short of the number of copies printed. The consequence was that the Club presently had on hand a supply of unsold copies (ranging from half a dozen to a hundred or more) of many of its publications. Although all such titles continued to sell to some extent, it long since grew clear that in the normal course of events a long time would be required to dispose of them all. Rather than keep these publications on the shelves indefinitely, the directors at their February meeting authorized the sale of all earlier books at one-third their original prices. A list of the seventeen titles was sent members on February 10th.

The response was both prompt and enthusiastic. Within two weeks after the list was sent out five of the titles had been completely sold. A list of the remaining twelve, with the old and new prices, follows:

<i>Title and Author</i>	<i>Former Price</i>	<i>Present Price</i>
NATIONALISM by Sir Rabindranath Tagore. Printer: The Norwood Press	\$ 2.00	\$.67
ODES AND SONNETS by Clark Ashton Smith. Printer: John Henry Nash	3.00	1.00
LILITH: A Dramatic Poem by George Sterling. Printer: Taylor & Taylor	6.00	2.00
A GRACIOUS VISITATION by Emma Francis Dawson. Printer: The Grabhorn Press	4.00	1.33
CONTINENT'S END: An Anthology of Contemporary California Poets. Printer: John Henry Nash . . .	15.00	5.00
AN INVOCATION by Ambrose Bierce. Printer: John Henry Nash	8.00	2.67
THE FINAL STANZA by Lewis Browne. Printer: Johnck & Seeger	3.50	1.17
THE PERSISTENCE OF POETRY by Witter Bynner. Printer: The Windsor Press	6.00	2.00
A BRIEF AND ACCURATE TREATISE OF TOBACCO by To. Venner. Printer: The Windsor Press	6.00	2.00
SIR WALTER SCOTT by John Buchan & Wm. C. Van Antwerp. Printer: Johnck & Seeger . . .	3.00	1.00

BIERCE AND THE POE HOAX by Carroll D. Hall.

Printer: The Windsor Press 3.00 1.00

A PRINTER'S GARLAND: A Typographic Miscellany by Cecil & James Johnson.

Printer: The Windsor Press 2.75 .92

Members are invited to take advantage of this opportunity to acquire some outstanding Club books at extremely low prices. Only a few copies remain of a number of the titles. To avoid possible disappointment orders should not be too long delayed.

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### ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

THE FOLLOWING new members have been elected since December 1, 1938:

| <i>Member</i>          |                     | <i>Sponsor</i>      |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Wallace Braden         | Los Angeles, Cal.   | Jack W. Hardy       |
| Robert E. Burroughs    | San Francisco, Cal. | Alfred Sutro        |
| Mrs. Lionel V. King    | Redwood City, Cal.  | John A. Sutro       |
| Wesley H. Porter       | Los Angeles, Cal.   | Oscar Lewis         |
| Herman A. Spindt       | Berkeley, Cal.      | Mrs. Hugh S. Allen  |
| Mrs. Harry A. Stetson  | San Francisco, Cal. | Alfred Sutro        |
| F. F. Thomas, Jr.      | Berkeley, Cal.      | W. B. Weston        |
| Mrs. Bessie H. Twaddle | Sacramento, Cal.    | Miss Carmelita Duff |
| Miss Myra L. Palache   | Berkeley, Cal.      | Mrs. H. P. Faye     |

The membership roll is now about thirty short of its maximum of six hundred. The Club is naturally desirous of filling the remaining vacancies and it takes this opportunity once more to bring that fact to the attention of each member. Two added inducements are currently offered new members. First, they will have the opportunity to participate in the sale (at drastically reduced prices) of earlier Club publications. Second, each incoming member will be presented (while the supply lasts) with a set of the 1938 keepsakes: Coast and Valley Towns of Early California.

## NOTES ON PUBLICATIONS

by ALBERT M. BENDER, Chairman, Publication Committee

THE MATTER of chief interest this month is the recent sale of early Club publications. By this move two desirable results were attained: the Club substantially reduced its stock of books, and members were enabled to purchase some desirable publications at very attractive prices. An account of the result of the sale appears elsewhere in this issue, together with a list of the remaining titles. The list is recommended to the prompt attention of every member who has not yet ordered. Although the reduced prices will remain in force until all copies are sold, a number of the books are already sold out and the supply of the others is diminishing rapidly.

All books included in the sale have been published five years or longer. More recent titles are all sold with the exception of the last, Clarence King's "The Helmet of Mambrino," of which a limited number of copies remain. This desirable little item—published by the University of California Press and priced at \$2.00—is in continued demand and the copies on hand will not last long.

Members who purchased copies of another 1938 publication, "A Leaf From Caxton's Polycronicon,"—which sold out in a few weeks—will be interested to know that it is currently being listed in dealers' catalogues at \$30.00, double the amount members paid for their copies. In this connection attention should be called to the Club's forthcoming book on the *Spectator*, with an original number of Addison and Steele's famous paper in each copy. I believe this book will be as much in demand as the Caxton.